Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar

أُصُول النَّحْو العَرَبِيّ

Mohammed Sawaie

ROUTLEDGE

Fundamentals of Arabic grammar

Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar provides an authoritative guide to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) grammar. It has been organised to promote a thorough understanding of MSA grammar and presents its complexities in a cohesive and user-friendly format, filling many gaps left by other textbooks. Explanations are clear, full and accessible and extensive cross-referencing, two generous indexes and six appendices provide users with easy access to the information they require. No prior knowledge of linguistic terminology is required.

Features include:

- Expert treatment of a full range of grammar topics and structures, including the case system, *IDhaafa*, the equational sentence, quantifiers and the vocative, generously spread across thirty-eight chapters
- Special attention to parts of speech, such as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions, given at the beginning of the book to acquaint students with the basic units of Arabic and provide a solid foundation for further learning
- A wide range of contemporary examples drawn from real life to provide a solid context for grammar points, further supported by word glosses and idiomatic translations of sentences
- Grammatical terms given in both Arabic and English
- A wide variety of supplementary learning resources such as practice sheets, exercises and verb tables available to download free at http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415710046/
- A substantial bibliography incorporating primary Arabic grammar sources in addition to secondary sources in Arabic and in English.

Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar has been field tested over a number of years and has been written by a highly experienced teacher of Arabic. It will be an essential resource for students and teachers of Arabic at all university levels and is suitable for use both as a companion reference text in Arabic language courses and as a standalone text in independent grammar classes.

Mohammed Sawaie is Professor of Arabic in the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Virginia, USA.

Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar

Mohammed Sawaie

أُصُولُ النَّحْوِ العَرَبِيِّ

محمّد سواعي

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2014
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2014 Mohammed Sawaie

The right of Mohammed Sawaie to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-0-415-71003-9 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-415-71004-6 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-88180-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Calisto
by Graphicraft Limited, Hong Kong

إنّي رَأَيْتُ أَنَّهُ لا يَكْتُبُ أَحَدٌ كِتاباً في يَوْمِهِ إلاّ قالَ في غَدِهِ: لَوْ غُيِّرَ هذا لَكانَ أَحْسَنَ. وَلَوْ زيدَ هذا لَكانَ يُسْتَحْسَنُ، وَلَوْ قُدِّمَ هذا لَكانَ أَجْمَلَ. وهذا مِنْ أَعظَمِ العِبَرِ، وهُو دَليلٌ عَلى اِسْتيلاءِ النَّقْصِ عَلى جُمْلَةِ البَشَرِ.

العِماد الإصفهاني

خَريدَة القَصْر وجَريدة العَصر

I have observed that no one finishes the writing of a book who does not say afterwards: had this change been made, the book would have been better; had this item been added the book would have been better appreciated; had this item been moved forward the book would have been more beautiful. In this lies the most important lesson: it is proof of the inherent imperfection of all humans.

Al-ᶜImad al-'Isfahani (died 1201 AD)
Kharidat al-Qasr wa Jaridat al-ᶜASr

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Acknowledgements *xxi*
Introduction *xxii*
Symbols used *xxvi*

1 The verb system in Arabic **1**

1.1 The performer of action 1
1.2 Verb tenses 1
1.3 Intransitive verbs versus transitive verbs 2
1.3.1 Intransitive verbs 2
1.3.2 Transitive verbs 2
1.4 Nouns as direct objects 3
1.5 Pronouns as direct objects 4
1.6 Gender 4
1.7 Number in verbs 5
1.8 Verb voice 5
1.8.1 The active voice 5
1.8.2 The passive voice 5
1.9 Verb forms or patterns 6
1.9.1 Form I verbs 6
1.9.2 Augmented verbs (Forms II–X) 8
1.9.3 Quadriliteral verbs 13
1.10 Verb moods 14
1.10.1 Indicative mood 14
1.10.2 Subjunctive mood 14
1.10.3 Jussive mood 15
1.10.4 Imperative mood 15

2 Nouns **16**

2.1 Types of nouns 16
2.2 Gender 17
2.3 Number 18
2.4 Determination of nouns 19
2.5 Function of nouns 21
2.6 The five nouns 25

3 The case system in Arabic **26**

3.1 The case system in English 26
3.2 The case system in Arabic 27
3.3 The nominative case 27
3.3.1 Nominative singular nouns 28
3.3.2 Nominative dual nouns 28
3.3.3 Nominative plural nouns 29
3.4 The accusative case 29
3.4.1 Accusative singular nouns 30
3.4.2 Accusative dual nouns 30
3.4.3 Accusative plural nouns 31
3.5 The genitive case 31
3.5.1 Genitive singular nouns 32
3.5.2 Genitive dual nouns 32
3.5.3 Genitive plural nouns 32

4 Adjectives **33**

4.1 Common forms of adjectives 33
4.1.1 Regular adjectives 33
4.1.2 Color words and traits as adjectives 33
4.1.3 *Nisba* adjectives 35
4.1.4 Other types of adjective 37
4.2 Noun–adjective agreement 37
4.2.1 Noun–adjective agreement in the singular 37
4.2.2 Noun–adjective agreement in the dual 38
4.2.3 Human noun–adjective agreement in the plural 39
4.2.4 Non-human noun–adjective agreement in the plural 40

5 Pronouns 41

5.1 Personal pronouns 41
5.1.1 Singular independent personal pronouns 42
5.1.2 Singular suffixal personal pronouns 42
5.1.3 Dual independent personal pronouns 45
5.1.4 Dual suffixal personal pronouns 45
5.1.5 Plural independent personal pronouns 46
5.1.6 Plural suffixal personal pronouns 46
5.2 Demonstrative pronouns 48
5.2.1 Singular demonstrative pronouns 48
5.2.2 Dual demonstrative pronouns 48
5.2.3 Plural demonstrative pronouns 49

6 Prepositions and adverbs functioning as prepositions 50

6.1 Bound prepositions 50
6.2 Independent prepositions 51
6.2.1 Prepositions that precede nouns or pronouns 51
6.2.2 Prepositions that precede nouns but not pronouns 53
6.2.3 Prepositions that can precede nouns signaling time reference 53
6.3 وَ and تَ in oath-making 53
6.4 Particles functioning as prepositions 54
6.5 Adverbs functioning as prepositions 54
6.6 Interrogative particles 55

7 Adverbs 56

7.1 Adverbs of time 56
7.2 Adverbs of place 61
7.3 Adverbs of degree 63
7.4 Placement of adverbs 64

8 The *IDhaafa*-construct 66

8.1 The first noun in *IDhaafa* 66
8.2 The second noun in *IDhaafa* 67

8.3 *IDhaafa* function in sentences 68
8.4 Multiple first nouns in *IDhaafa* 68
8.5 Adjective *IDhaafa* (quasi- or pseudo-*IDhaafa*) 69
8.6 Modification of *IDhaafa* 70
8.7 لِـ construct for clarification of *IDhaafa* elements 72
8.7.1 Multiple noun *IDhaafa* and لِـ construct 72
8.8 Use of مِنْ instead of لِـ 74
8.9 The negative noun غَير 74
8.9.1 غَير with nouns 75
8.9.2 غَيْرُ with pronouns 75
8.9.3 غَير with adjectives 76
8.9.4 غَير after prepositions 77
8.9.5 غَير with the definite article 77
8.9.6 لا غَيْرُ and لَيْسَ غَيْرُ 77
8.10 *IDhaafa* using elements other than غَير 78

9 The equational sentence 79

9.1 Personal pronouns as subjects 79
9.1.1 Personal pronouns (as subjects) + proper nouns (as predicates) 79
9.1.2 Personal pronouns + common nouns 80
9.1.3 Personal pronouns + adjectives 81
9.1.4 Proper nouns or personal pronouns + prepositional phrases or adverbs 82
9.2 Demonstrative pronouns 83
9.2.1 Demonstrative pronouns + proper nouns 83
9.2.2 Demonstrative pronouns with common nouns as predicates 83
9.2.3 Demonstrative pronouns modifying subjects of equational sentences 84
9.3 Common nouns as subjects 85
9.3.1 Common nouns + prepositional phrases or adverbs 85
9.3.2 Common nouns + adjectives 86
9.4 Subject–predicate inversion 86
9.4.1 Interrogative particles 87
9.4.2 Prepositional or adverbial phrases 91

9.5 Modifying subjects and predicates 92
9.5.1 Modifying subjects by adjectives 92
9.5.2 Modifying predicates by adjectives 94
9.6 هَل 95
9.7 Categorical negation 95

10 *Kaana* and its sisters 97

10.1 Negation of equational sentences 99
10.1.1 Negation of the equational sentence in the singular 99
10.1.2 Negation of the equational sentence in the dual 100
10.1.3 Negation of the equational sentence in the plural 101
10.2 Nouns or adjectives as predicates 102
10.2.1 Singular nouns and adjectives as predicates 102
10.2.2 Dual nouns and adjectives as predicates 103
10.2.3 Plural nouns and adjectives as predicates 103
10.3 The equational sentence in past tense 104
10.3.1 The equational sentence in past tense in the singular 105
10.3.2 The equational sentence in past tense in the dual 106
10.3.3 The equational sentence in past tense in the plural 107
10.4 Negation of *kaana* 107
10.4.1 ما + past tense of كانَ 108
10.4.2 لم + jussive of كانَ 109
10.5 Other sisters of كانَ 109

11 Verbal sentences: past tense 111

11.1 Sentence structure 111
11.2 Sentences with intransitive verbs 112
11.3 Sentences with transitive verbs 112
11.4 Past tense singular 115
11.4.1 Form I verbs 115
11.4.2 Augmented verbs (Forms II–X) 127
11.4.3 Quadriliteral verbs 145
11.5 Singular suffix pronouns: direct object 145
11.6 Dual verb conjugation: the past tense 146
11.6.1 Hollow verbs 148
11.6.2 Defective verbs 149
11.6.3 Doubled verbs 150

11.7 Sentence structure 150
11.8 Dual suffix pronouns: direct object 151
11.9 Plural verb conjugation: the past tense 152
11.9.1 Hollow verbs 153
11.9.2 Defective verbs 154
11.9.3 Doubled verbs 155
11.10 Plural suffix pronouns: direct object 156
11.11 Past tense negation 157

12 Present tense indicative 158

12.1 Present tense singular 158
12.1.1 Form I verbs 159
12.1.2 Augmented verbs (Forms II–X) 165
12.2 Present tense dual 175
12.2.1 Hollow verbs 176
12.2.2 Defective verbs 177
12.2.3 Doubled verbs 178
12.3 Present tense plural 178
12.3.1 Form I verbs 179
12.3.2 Form V verbs 183
12.3.3 Form VI verbs 183
12.3.4 Form VII verbs 184
12.3.5 Form VIII verbs 184
12.3.6 Form IX verbs 184
12.3.7 Form X verbs 185
12.4 Present tense negation 186

13 Present tense subjunctive 187

13.1 Singular subjunctive verbs 187
13.1.1 حَتّى، كَيْ، لِكَيْ، لِـ "in order to," "for the purpose of" 187
13.1.2 أَنْ 188
13.2 Dual subjunctive verbs 195
13.3 Plural subjunctive verbs 196
13.4 Negation of the subjunctive 197

14 The future tense **199**

14.1 Future tense singular 199
14.2 Future tense dual 200
14.3 Future tense plural 200
14.4 Future tense negation 201
14.4.1 Singular 201
14.4.2 Dual 202
14.4.3 Plural 202

15 Jussive verbs **204**

15.1 Negation with *lam* 204
15.1.1 Verbs in the singular 204
15.1.2 Verbs in the dual 208
15.1.3 Verbs in the plural 212

16 Passive voice **216**

16.1 Past tense 216
16.1.1 Defective verbs 221
16.1.2 Doubled verbs 222
16.2 Present tense 222
16.2.1 Hollow verbs 223
16.2.2 Defective verbs 224
16.2.3 Doubled verbs 225
16.3 Subjunctive verbs in the passive voice 225
16.4 Future tense 226

17 Imperative verbs **227**

17.1 Form I imperative verbs 228
17.1.1 Middle vowel *fat-Ha* or *kasra* 228
17.1.2 Middle vowel *hamza* 230
17.1.3 *Waaw*-beginning verbs 230
17.1.4 Hollow verbs 232
17.1.5 Defective verbs 234
17.1.6 Doubled verbs 236

17.2 Form II–X imperative verbs 238
17.2.1 Form II verbs 238
17.2.2 Form III verbs 239
17.2.3 Form IV verbs 239
17.2.4 Form VII verbs 240
17.2.5 Form VIII verbs 241
17.2.6 Form X verbs 242
17.2.7 Form V verbs 242
17.2.8 Form VI verbs 243
17.3 Indirect imperative 244
17.4 Negative imperative 245
17.5 Warnings 245

18 Past continuous tense 247

18.1 A state in the past 247
18.2 Past habitual action 247
18.3 Past continuous 248
18.3.1 Past continuous tense negation 249

19 Past perfect tense 251

20 Conditionals 254

20.1 Particles with varying tenses 254
20.1.1 إذا "if" 254
20.1.2 لَوْ "were," "had…been" 256
20.1.3 إنْ "if" 257
20.2 Particles with the jussive mood 258
20.2.1 مَنْ "whoever" 259
20.2.2 ما "whatever" 259
20.2.3 مَهْما "whatever" 260
20.2.4 أَيْنَما "wherever" 260
20.2.5 مَتى "whenever" 260
20.2.6 أَيُّ "whoever, whichever" 262
20.2.7 كَيْفَما "however" 262
20.2.8 حَيْثُما "wherever" 262

21 *'Inna* and its sisters 263

21.1 لكِنَّ "but" 263
21.2 لِأَنَّ "because" 264
21.3 إِنَّ "Indeed" and "that" 265
21.4 أَنَّ "that" 266
21.5 لَعَلَّ "perhaps" 269
21.6 كَأَنَّ "as if, as though" 269
21.7 لَيْتَ "if only" 270

22 Relative pronouns 272

22.1 Singular relative pronouns 272
22.1.1 اَلَّذي and اَلَّتي replacing subject nouns 272
22.1.2 اَلَّذي and اَلَّتي replacing object nouns 274
22.1.3 اَلَّذي and اَلَّتي replacing nouns governed by prepositions 274
22.1.4 اَلَّتي replacing non-human plural nouns 275
22.1.5 Relative pronouns without antecedents 276
22.2 Dual relative pronouns 277
22.2.1 اللذانِ and اللتانِ replacing subject nouns 278
22.2.2 اَللذَيْنِ and اَللَتينِ replacing direct object nouns and objects of prepositions 278
22.3 Plural relative pronouns 280
22.3.1 اَلَّذينَ 280
22.3.2 اللاتي / اللوائي/ اللائي/ اَللواتي 281
22.4 Relative clauses with indefinite antecedents 283
22.5 Relative clauses without antecedents 285
22.5.1 مَنْ and ما as relative pronouns 285

23 Agentive nouns 288

23.1 Form I verbs 288
23.1.1 Hollow verbs 288
23.1.2 Defective verbs 289
23.1.3 Doubled verbs 290

23.2 Form II–X verbs 290
23.2.1 Hollow verbs in فَعَّلَ - اِسْتَفْعَلَ (Forms II–X) اِسْم فاعِل 292
23.2.2 Doubled verbs in فَعَّلَ - اِسْتَفْعَلَ (Forms II–X) اِسْم فاعِل 292
23.3 Functions of agentive nouns 293
23.3.1 Agentive nouns functioning as nouns 293
23.3.2 Agentive nouns functioning as adjectives 295
23.3.3 Agentive nouns functioning as transitive verbs 295

24 Passive participles 297

24.1 Derivation of passive participles 297
24.1.1 فَعَلَ (Form I) 297
24.1.2 فَعَّلَ - اِسْتَفْعَلَ (Forms II–X) 298
24.2 Functions of passive participles 301
24.2.1 Passive participles as adjectives 301
24.2.2 Passive participles as nouns 302
24.3 Passive participle phrases 303
24.3.1 Passive participle phrases used with أَنَّ 303
24.3.2 Passive participle phrases used with أَنْ 303

25 Verbal nouns: *maSdar*s 305

25.1 Derivation of *maSdar*s 306
25.1.1 فَعَلَ (Form I) *maSdar*s 306
25.1.2 فَعَّلَ - اِسْتَفْعَلَ (Forms II–X) *maSdar*s 311
25.1.3 Quadriliteral verb *maSdar*s 321
25.1.4 Color word *maSdar*s 322
25.1.5 *Miim*-beginning *maSdar*s 322
25.1.6 Abstract nouns of quality 323
25.2 Behavior of *maSdar*s 323
25.2.1 Definite and indefinite *maSdar*s 324
25.3 Cognate Objects 324
25.4 *MaSdar*s with direct objects 325
25.5 *MaSdar*s with prepositions 326

25.6 *MaSdar*s substituting for
أَنْ + الفِعْل المُضارِع المَنصوب / أَنْ المَصْدَرِيَّة 326
25.7 Objects of purpose 327
25.8 Negation of *maSdar*s with عَدَم 329

26 Diminutive nouns 330

27 Comparative adjectives 334

27.1 The function of adjectives 334
27.2 Comparative adjectives 335
27.3 Comparative of color words 337
27.4 Superlative adjectives 338
27.5 Superlative adjectives of color 341

28 Plural nouns 342

28.1 Regular masculine plurals 342
28.1.1 فَعَلَ (Form I) active participle plurals 343
28.2 Regular feminine plurals 346
28.3 Irregular (broken) plurals 347
28.4 Place noun plurals 351
28.5 Instrument noun plurals 353
28.6 The five nouns and their plurals 357
28.7 Unit noun plurals 359
28.8 Plural nouns of single occurrence 360
28.9 Profession noun plurals 362
28.10 Nouns of intensity and their plurals 363
28.11 Plural nouns and adjectives 363
28.12 Collective/mass nouns 367

29 Indeclinable nouns/diptotes 368

29.1 Indeclinable plural nouns 369
29.2 Indeclinable adjectives 370
29.3 Indeclinable proper nouns 371
29.4 Indeclinable compound proper nouns 371

30 Numbers **372**

30.1 "One" and "two" 372
30.2 "Three" to "ten" 374
30.2.1 The counted noun from "three" to "ten" for indefinite nouns 374
30.3 Cardinal numbers as adjectives for definite nouns 377
30.4 "Eleven" and "twelve" 378
30.5 "Thirteen" to "nineteen" 379
30.6 The tens ("twenty," "thirty," etc.) 379
30.7 "Twenty-one" to "ninety-nine" 380
30.8 Hundred(s) 382
30.8.1 "Two hundred" 382
30.9 Thousand(s) 384
30.9.1 "Two thousand" 384
30.9.2 Thousands and dates 385
30.10 Million(s) 386
30.11 Ordinal numbers "first" to "tenth" as adjectives 388
30.12 Ordinal numbers as adverbs 389
30.13 Lists of cardinal and ordinal numbers 390
30.13.1 Cardinal and ordinal numbers from 1 to 10 390
30.13.2 Cardinal numbers with counted nouns 390
30.13.3 Ordinal numbers with counted nouns 391
30.14 Fractions 391

31 Quantifiers **393**

31.1 كُلّ 393
31.1.1 كُلّ plus indefinite singular nouns: "each and every" 393
31.1.2 كُلّ plus definite singular nouns: "the whole of" 393
31.1.3 كُلّ plus definite plural nouns: "all of" 394
31.2 بَعْض "some of" 394
31.3 جَمِيع "all of" 395
31.4 مُعْظَم "most of" 395
31.5 كِلا "both" 396
31.6 كِلْتا "both" 396
31.7 عِدَّةٌ "many, a number of" 397
31.8 The quantifiers as adjectives 397

32 *Haal* clauses (accusative of circumstance) 399

32.1 A nominal sentence as a subordinate clause 399
32.2 Verbal sentences without واو الحال 400
32.3 Equational sentences 401
32.4 Use of active participles, passive participles or nouns 402
32.5 Use of prepositional phrases 402
32.6 Negation of *Haal* clause 403
32.7 *Haal* clauses in the past tense 404

33 *Tamyiiz* (accusative of specification) 405

33.1 Comparisons using *tamyiiz* 405
33.2 Numerals 11 to 99 and *tamyiiz* 406
33.3 Weights, measures, and *tamyiiz* 406
33.4 كَم "how much," "how many" and *tamyiiz* 407

34 Exception 408

34.1 إلاّ 408
34.2 ما عَدا 409
34.3 عَدا 410
34.4 غَيْرُ 410
34.5 سِوى 411
34.6 ما خَلا 412
34.7 خَلا 412
34.8 حاشا 413
34.9 بِاسْتِثْناءِ 413

35 Vocative 414

35.1 يا 414
35.2 نُدْبَة "lamentation" 417
35.3 أيُّها 418
35.4 أَيَّتُها 418
35.5 يا أَيَّتُها / يا أَيُّها 419
35.6 أَي 419

36 Exclamation **420**

36.1 ما plus comparative adjectives 420
36.2 ما... ما plus verbal phrases 421
36.3 أَفْعِلْ بِـ 422
36.4 يا لِـ / لَـ 422
36.5 كَمْ 423
36.6 نِعْمَ and بِئْسَ 424

37 Apposition **425**

37.1 Substitution of a noun for the whole 425
37.2 Substitution of a part for the whole 426
37.3 Comprehensive substitution 426
37.4 Correcting oneself 426

38 Emphasis **427**

38.1 عَين / نَفْس 427
38.1.1 عَيْـن / نَفْس in the dual 428
38.1.2 عَيْـن / نَفْس in the plural 428
38.2 ذات "self" 429
38.3 Emphasis by pronoun repetition 429

Appendix A: hollow verbs *431*
Appendix B: defective verbs *435*
Appendix C: doubled verbs *436*
Appendix D: فاعَلَ *verbs (Form III)* *438*
Appendix E: أَفْعَلَ *verbs (Form IV)* *440*
Appendix F: verbs requiring the use of 'anna أَنَّ *441*
Appendix G: phrases requiring the use of 'anna أَنَّ *444*
Appendix H: phrases requiring the use of 'an أَنْ *445*
Bibliography *446*
Index 1: English grammatical terms *448*
Index 2: Arabic grammatical terms *453*

Acknowledgements

This work originated as notes on Arabic grammar made while teaching Arabic as a foreign language at various levels, from beginning to advanced, and independent courses on Arabic grammar in a university setting over many years. I am indebted to Vivian Bishara McCormack for her encouragement to write down this material, and for her contribution to the early drafts. Barbara A. Brothers was always supportive and encouraging. Omima El-Araby witnessed the completion of an early draft, read the manuscript and offered many suggestions for improvement during her tenure at the University of Virginia, while teaching a joint course with me for a number of years. Students who used this material and tolerated the often last-minute production of rough chapters deserve sincere thanks. Many thanks to Farzaneh Milani, current Chair of my department, for providing funds to have the book manuscript edited professionally.

Numerous colleagues, friends and former students from various regions of the world read this material in its varying stages and contributed to its improvement: Abdulkarim S. Ramadan, Adel S. Gamal, Medhat Credi, Omar H. Okasha, Ahmad Abu Dalu, Benjamin Smith, Thomas Wilson, Ellen Duthoy, and Mohammed Rabbaa. To them all, I offer sincere thanks. I also thank anonymous reviewers, some of whose comments were helpful. I cannot express in words my gratitude to Cecilia F. Blewer for her encouragement, support and constant probing for a better understanding of grammar, and for her deep interest in improving this work. Susan Dempsey was most helpful in offering technical support. To the Routledge team, Andrea Hartill, Geraldine Martin, Isabelle Cheng, and Helena Power, Copy Editor, I extend my gratitude for their efficiency and cooperation at all stages of bringing this work to publication. From those who contributed to this work and were not mentioned I ask forgiveness.

Introduction

The rise of the grammatical tradition among Arabs is tied closely to the rise of Islam and its holy book, the Qur'an. This book became a subject of study and linguistic analysis in the seventh century A.D. This is no different to the development of grammars of other nations that was stimulated by religious or other major works: the Vedas gave rise to the grammar of Sanskrit, Homer to the Greek grammar, the Biblical canons to Hebrew and the book of Confucius to Chinese.

The first book on Arabic grammar, *al-Kitaab*, was authored by Sibawayhi in the eighth century. Since then, many schools of Arabic grammar have developed, with various competing regional and intellectual paradigms resulting in a great number of books from various perspectives and for different purposes. Through such works, the Arabic language has been minutely and painstakingly analyzed and set out in countless descriptions by eminent scholars writing in Arabic as well as in major Eastern and Western languages.

This work is not intended to add one more book to the distinguished list of classics on the subject. Rather, it is intended for a special audience: students learning Arabic as a foreign language at university level. One of its major goals is to present the fundamentals of Arabic grammar to those in the process of acquiring the language in an easy-to-read format.

This material consists of topics essential to the mastery of Arabic as a foreign language, both orally and in its written form. It treats the grammatical issues integral to language learning at university level, both undergraduate as well as graduate. Various grammar details and innumerable complex exceptions to rules, endemic to classic Arabic grammar books and university-level grammar courses in Arab universities, were deliberately left out.

The first eight chapters cover the basic building blocks of language in a manner learners untrained in grammar in their high schools can find accessible.

These chapters present a general overview of how those elements interface with each other to form a system of communication, both orally and in writing, to foster accuracy in the linguistic output, the means of communication in a speech community. *Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar*, henceforth *Fundamentals*, presumes its users to have mastered the Arabic writing system, the names of letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent. This is normally expected by the end of the first four weeks of the first semester of an introductory Arabic language course in any serious university program. That is why all examples are given in the Arabic orthography, and references are made to the Arabic names of the letters and basic notions such as *tanwiin*.

Fundamentals is not intended to replace instructional textbooks. It is intended to supplement and to reinforce them; to function as a resource book, a reference tool providing a holistic presentation of grammar rather than the disjointed approach often encountered in textbooks available on the market nowadays.

The arrangement of chapters attempts to relate relevant items to one another. Materials specific to nouns, their cases, derivation, numbers, etc., for example, are sequentially ordered in the interest of providing a comprehensive treatment of nouns. The same is to be said about verbs, their types, behaviors, tenses, and moods, etc. Instructors can enjoy leeway in determining which chapters, or sections of chapters, are essential to their students' immediate needs. They, therefore, can order the presentation of materials to their students according to the learners' levels, curricular requirements in a specific week, or their program priorities. The chapter on verbs, for example, is too detailed to present to a beginning-level class in one sitting. The assignment of such a chapter could be spread over a number of sessions, as need dictates. Similarly, to treat the grammar of numbers adequately instructors may choose to divide this topic for different presentations on different days.

Fundamentals is well suited for an independent grammar course at university level. Indeed, its origin lay in just such a course. In this case, it plays a different role. As a course textbook, it can serve as a desk reference for both the student and instructor and will enable them to clarify points of grammar in an organized fashion.

The pages of this work contain a large number of tables of verb conjugation spread out in the various chapters dealing with verbs, their tenses and moods. In addition, there are several supplementary tables, placed on the web, to which learners can refer to ensure mastery of the verb system and other derivations.

Learning the grammar contained in the pages of this book is supported by the accompanying exercises placed on the web. These exercises are intended for in-class practice as well as for homework assignments. Language learning is not different from any skill that can be mastered through practice only. As the saying goes, "practice makes perfect."

The Arabic introduced in this book is often referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), or Modern Literary Arabic (MLA), the language variety used in formal settings across the Arabic-speaking regions, both in print and, increasingly, in electronic media, especially in the last few decades. The Arabic term *fuS-Ha*, "refined, pure," is often employed in reference to this linguistic variety. Thus, the examples used in these pages to illustrate certain grammar points mirror those utterances delivered in formal settings by literate, educated native speakers, orally or in writing. Due to historical and other reasons, educated native speakers of MSA have not represented a majority in their societies. Their numbers, however, are increasing due to many factors: the spread of education, rising literacy levels, and the recent introduction of pan-Arab electronic media venues that employ the linguistic variety contained in this work.

Examples are provided only in the Arabic script with full vocalization, except for proper nouns where case markers have been left out. Some grammar books provide phonetic transcription of example sentences. This book deliberately avoids this practice in order to encourage learners to access the language in its own writing system. Word glosses and idiomatic translations of sentences are also provided.

Latinate nomenclature may not always be adequate to characterize the Arabic linguistic phenomena under discussion. There is a deliberate effort on our side to introduce Arabic grammar terminology, often side by side with commonly used Western terminology. Instead of using the designation "assimilative verbs" used by Western sources, for example, the term *waaw*-beginning verbs is employed, named after the letter *waaw*—a term favored by Arab grammarians, and more descriptive in the classification of those verbs. The linguistically savvy learner will find the Arabic labels more accurate than the Latinate ones, which are conventionally imposed from outside the language tradition to describe grammar categories belonging to a different language tradition and family.

To study Arabic grammar is to participate in Arab culture. In addition to facilitating precise communication in Arabic, the study of grammar opens doors

to cultural production like theology, literature, songs, and even humor. Many a fine point turns on grammar, and in these Arabic speakers have always found much to enjoy and debate. It is hoped that students will learn to appreciate Arabic grammar as much as they do the music, food and other aspects of Arab culture.

Mohammed Sawaie
Charlottesville, Virginia
April 26, 2013

Symbols used

‘ = *hamza* ء
H = *Haa’* ح
kh = khaa’ خ
dh = ذ
S = *Saad* ص
Dh = *Dhaad* ض
T = Taa’ ط
Z = Zaa’ ظ
ᶜ = ᶜayn ع
gh = *ghayn* غ
q = *qaaf* ق
a = *fat-Ha*
aa = ’alif ا
i = *kasra*
ii = yaa’ ي
y = semi consonant
u = *Dhamma*
uu = *waaw* و
w = semi consonant

M = Masculine
F = Feminine
s.o. = someone
s.th. = something
Sg = singular
D = dual
Pl = plural
lit. = literally

CHAPTER 1

The verb system in Arabic الأَفعال

Verbs are that part of speech that express action or the occurrence of an event. Verbs are usually the first element in MSA sentences that contain verbs, followed by performers of actions, called فاعِل in Arabic. A sentence whose initial element is a verb is known as a *verbal sentence*. A sentence beginning with a noun is called a *nominal sentence*. There are grammatical consequences for the choice of placing the verb or the performer of action at the head of the sentence. Examples of verbal and nominal sentences follow:

وَصَلَ الصَّديقُ أَمْسِ.	The friend (M) arrived yesterday.
الصَّديقَةُ وَصَلَت أَمْسِ.	The friend (F) arrived yesterday.

1.1 THE PERFORMER OF ACTION فاعِل

All verbs have a فاعِل, the performer of action. This element could be expressed as a noun, or nouns, or as a pronoun, explicit or implied. An expressed noun functioning as a performer is always in the nominative case; it can be definite or indefinite. Definite singular nouns must end with a *Dhamma* in the writing system of formal Arabic, pronounced *-u*; indefinite singular nouns end with two *Dhamma*s in orthography, pronounced *-un.* Dual definite and indefinite nouns such as فاعِل must have انِ- at their ends; regular masculine plural nouns have ونَ-; irregular plural nouns, like singular nouns, have either a *Dhamma* or two, depending on their determination (whether they are definite or indefinite). Finally, regular feminine plural nouns must have ات- with either a *Dhamma* or two, depending on their determination.

1.2 VERB TENSES

Verbs can convey a sense of time frame: past, present, or future; whether the action happened in the past or was a single occurrence, or if one action

happened before or after another, whether it happens regularly and habitually, or is happening at the present time, or whether it will happen at some future time. These time references of events expressed by verbs are called tenses. Verb tenses in Arabic are divided into the following:

1. Past tense is used to express a past, completed action (see Chapter 11), or an action which was ongoing in the past (see Chapter 18 on past continuous tense), or two actions which happened in the past with one action occurring before the other (see past perfect tense, Chapter 19).
2. Present tense is used to express actions in the present, either happening habitually or regularly, or to state a fact. Additionally, this tense can be used to express the future (see Chapter 14). Forms of the present tense are also used in imperatives and their negatives, and follow subjunctive particles.
3. Future tense employs verbs to express action that will happen at some point in the future (see Chapter 14).

1.3 INTRANSITIVE VERBS الأَفْعالُ اللازِمَةُ VERSUS TRANSITIVE VERBS الأَفعال الـمُتَعَدِّيَة

1.3.1 Intransitive verbs الأَفْعالُ اللازِمَةُ

Some verbs require only a performer of action, the فاعِل, to make a complete sentence. For example, the verbs نامَ "he slept, to sleep" or اِبْتَسَمَ "he smiled, to smile" express actions that are unilaterally performed by one person, namely the person who slept or smiled. Such verbs are referred to as *intransitive verbs* (فِعل لازم / Pl أَفعال لازِمَة), verbs that do not require direct objects as in كَبُرَ "to become bigger," ضَحِكَ "to laugh." Intransitive verbs are often used with prepositions which are learned as part and parcel of learning the verb itself and how it is used. Examples of intransitive verbs include: ذَهَبَ إلى "to go to," رَجَعَ مِنْ/ إلِى "to return from/to," خَرَجَ مِنْ "to go out, exit," etc.

1.3.2 Transitive verbs الأَفْعالُ الـمُتَعَدِّيَة

Some verbs express actions by a performer that extends explicitly or implicitly to something or someone else. Such verbs are called *transitive verbs* (فِعل مُتَعَدٍّ / Pl أَفعال مُتَعَدِّيَة). A transitive verb not only has a فاعِل, performer, but can

take what is referred to as مَفْعولٌ بِهِ, a direct object. Examples of transitive verbs include دَرَسَ "to study," كَتَبَ "to write," فَهِمَ "to understand," شَرِبَ "to drink," etc. If the direct object is not mentioned, the speaker/writer is using a stylistic strategy called *truncation* and is leaving it to the listener/reader to fill it in. A limited number of verbs take two direct objects. Examples of such verbs include: أَعْطى "to give," عَيَّنَ "to appoint," اِنْتَخَبَ "to elect, select." Consider the following examples:

أَعْطى الرَّجُلُ الوَلَدَ ديناراً. The man gave the boy a *dinar.*

عَيَّنَ الرَّئيسُ الأُستاذَ وزيراً. The president appointed the professor as a minister.

1.4 NOUNS AS DIRECT OBJECTS

Direct objects are always in the accusative case (مَنْصوب); they can be definite or indefinite (see Chapter 3 on cases). Singular, definite nouns functioning as direct objects must end with a *fat-Ha* in formal spoken or scripted Arabic. On the other hand, if the direct object is indefinite masculine, it must end with an *'alif* bearing two *fat-Ha*s اً (*tanwiin*) in the orthography. Masculine, indefinite nouns as direct objects ending with *hamza* do not take this *'alif*-bearing two *fat-Ha*s, as in, for example, سَماءً "sky," ماءً "water," هواءً "air," etc. Feminine nouns functioning as direct objects end with two *fat-Ha*s placed above the feminine marker, the *taa' marbuuTa* ةً. Consider the following:

الطالِبَةُ قَرَأَت كِتاباً. The student (F) read a book.

حُسَين شَرِبَ قَهْوَةً. Hussein drank coffee.

Dual masculine or feminine nouns must end with يْنِ- when functioning as direct objects, as in the following examples:

قابلوا مُوَظَّفَيْنِ. They met two employees.

دعَوْنا صَديقَتَيْنِ. We invited two friends (F).

Regular masculine nouns end with ينَ-; irregular plural nouns as objects behave largely like singular nouns with respect to their accusative case endings; definite

feminine regular plural nouns must have a *kasra* instead of *fat-Ha* or two *fat-Ha*s if they are indefinite. Consider the following examples:

وَظَّفَتِ الشَّرِكَةُ مُهَنْدِسينَ.	The company employed engineers (M).
قابَلَتِ المُديرَةُ مُدَرِّساتٍ.	The director met teachers (F, Pl).

1.5 PRONOUNS AS DIRECT OBJECTS

If the direct object is a pronoun, this pronoun assumes a *cliticized*, shortened form that must attach to the end of the verb as a suffix (see Chapter 5 on pronouns). The direct object pronoun cannot stand independently and is understood to be in the accusative case. Consider the following:

الأَبُ قابَلَنا أَمْسِ.	The father met us yesterday.
هَلْ شاهَدْتَها في المَكْتَبَةِ؟	Did you see her in the library?
عَرَفْتُهُم أَثْناءَ الدِّراسَةِ في الجامِعَةِ.	I knew them during the [my] university study.

1.6 GENDER

Verbs are inflected to first, second and third pronouns. They must reflect the gender of the فاعِل for the second أَنْتَ "you (M)," أَنْتِ "you (F)," their dual and plural forms (see Chapter 5 on pronouns) and third person pronouns هُوَ "he," هِيَ "she," and their dual and plural forms. The first person pronouns أنا "I" and نَحْنُ "we" do not have gender markings in verb inflection/conjugation. If the فاعِل is a feminine noun, it is marked by suffixing ت-, as in the following:

الطّالِبَةُ أَكَلَت الخُبْزَ.	The student (F) ate the bread.
أَكَلَتِ الطّالِبَةُ الخُبْزَ.	The student (F) ate the bread.

Because verbs are specific to gender, person and number (below), no pronoun is necessary to represent the فاعِل. If a pronoun is used, it simply adds emphasis.

1.7 NUMBER IN VERBS

Singular nouns such as فاعِل are used with singular verbs. If, however, the فاعِل is a dual or plural noun placed before the verb, as in nominal sentences, the verb must reflect the number of the noun. (This matter is treated in detail in Chapter 11.) The following examples are illustrative:

شَرِبَ المُعَلِّمونَ القَهْوَةَ.	The teachers drank coffee.
المُعَلّمونَ شَرِبوا القَهْوَةَ.	The teachers drank coffee.

1.8 VERB VOICE

1.8.1 The active voice

All verb tenses, past, present and future, discussed thus far are in the active voice. This means that the identity of the performer of the action, i.e. the فاعِل, is known to interlocutors; it is easily identifiable by the presence of the noun indicating who carried out the action, as in the following examples:

كَسَرَ الطالِبُ الزُّجاجَ.	The student broke the glass.
يَكْتُبُ الصُّحُفِيُّ مَقالَةً كُلَّ أُسْبوعٍ.	The journalist writes an article every week.

1.8.2 The passive voice

In cases when the performer is not identified or is unknown, the verb is rendered in the passive voice. Passive verbs in Arabic in all tenses undergo internal vowel change(s) from the active. The two examples in the active voice above are rendered in the passive voice as follows:

كُسِرَ الزُّجاجُ.	The glass was broken.
تُكْتَبُ مَقالَةٌ كُلَّ أُسْبوعٍ.	An article is written every week.

Note that the performers of actions in these sentences are not identified, and that the accusative direct objects الزُّجاجَ "the glass," and مَقالَةً "essay, an article,"

in the active voice sentences changed their cases to the nominative. Accusative direct objects changing to the nominative case are labeled as نائِب الفاعِل "performer deputy" in Arabic grammar. Note that the verb يَكْتُبُ "he writes" in the second sentence changes gender into the feminine to agree with the feminine noun مَقالة "essay, article" when it becomes the فاعِل of the passive verb.

In addition to obscuring the identity of the performer in the preceding examples, the passive voice is sometimes used for stylistic variation, especially in writing (see Chapter 16 for detailed discussion).

1.9 VERB FORMS OR PATTERNS وَزْن OR صيغة

Arab grammarians describe Arabic verbs by using a standard verb, the verb فَعَلَ "to do," and rendering it into various forms or patterns with prefixes and infixes to describe how a particular verb fits into the general patterning of Arabic verbs. It is a device similar to how X, Y, and Z serve as templates for algebraic expressions. The three consonants of the verb فَعَلَ stand for the three consonants that comprise the root of most Arabic verbs. These tri-consonantal verbs are called فِعْل ثُلاثِيّ / Pl أَفْعال ثُلاثِيَّة. The ف represents the first consonant, ع represents the second consonant, and ل represents the third consonant. Thus, from the three consonants د ،ر and س we obtain the verb دَرَسَ "he studied, to study"; it is in the فَعَلَ form, Form I. When the middle consonant is doubled phonetically (written with a *shadda* in the orthography), we obtain دَرَّسَ. This verb is said to be in the فَعَّلَ form, Form II; the newly formed verb means "he taught." Western writers on Arabic grammar refer to verb categories by the use of Roman numerals. A verb consisting of three consonants is referred to as a Form I verb. Other verb forms are assigned different Roman numerals, as we shall see below.

1.9.1 Form I verbs صيغَة فَعَلَ

Verbs in the past tense in فَعَلَ form express the third person singular pronoun هُوَ. They always end in *fat-Ha*. The middle vowel may be a *fat-Ha* as in يَكْتُبُ / كَتَبَ "he wrote," or a *kasra* as in يَلْعَبُ / لَعِبَ "he played," or a *Dhamma* as in يَكْبُرُ / كَبُرَ "he grew up." Schooled native speakers memorize their verb patterns and internalize this information. Foreign learners are expected to do the same.

Tri-consonantal فَعَلَ verbs can be intransitive and transitive verbs (see above). فَعَلَ verbs (Form I) are generally viewed to have several subcategories, presented below under their respective titles:

1.9.1.1 waaw-beginning verbs اَلأَفْعال الواوِيَّة

فَعَلَ verbs include a list of verbs that begin with a *waaw* in the past tense, known as أَفْعال الـمِثال, or أَفْعال واوِيَّة "*waaw*-beginning verbs." The middle vowel in the past tense varies. Some of these verbs are intransitive, others are transitive. In the present tense, the *waaw* for the third person singular pronoun هُوَ "he" changes to *yaa'*, as we shall see in Chapter 12. Following are intransitive verbs in this category: وَجَبَ "to become necessary, to be incumbent," وَصَلَ / يَصِلُ "to arrive at, reach," وَقَفَ / يَقِفُ "to stand up, to stop." Transitive verbs in this category include وَجَدَ / يَجِدُ "to find, to locate," وَصَفَ / يَصِفُ "to describe," and وَهَبَ / يَهِبُ "to grant."

1.9.1.2 yaa'-beginning verbs اَلأَفْعالُ اليائِيَّة

فَعَلَ verbs include a list of verbs that begin with a *yaa'* in the past tense, known as أَفْعال يائِيَّة "*yaa'*-beginning verbs." These verbs tend to be intransitive, and their use is rather infrequent. Examples include يَئِسَ / يَيْأَسُ "to despair, to lose hope," يَبِسَ / يَيْبَسُ "to be/become dry."

1.9.1.3 Hollow verbs اَلأَفْعال الجَوْفاء

Hollow verbs in the past tense consist of two consonants separated by an *'alif* ا as in نامَ / يَنامُ "to sleep," قالَ / يَقولُ "to say," etc. They have roots that are either *waaw* or *yaa'*.

1.9.1.4 Defective verbs الأفْعال الـمُعْتَلَّة الآخِر (الأَفْعال النّاقِصَة)

Defective verbs الأَفْعال الـمُعْتَلَّة الآخِر or الأفْعال النّاقِصَة in the past tense end with either *'alif maqSuura* or *'alif*. Examples of verbs ending with *'alif maqSuura* are بَنى / يَبْني "to build," and رَمى / يَرْمي "to throw, to toss." Examples of verbs ending with regular *'alif* include عَلا / يَعْلو "to go up, to rise," and سما / يَسْمو "to become sublime."

1.9.1.5 Doubled verbs اَلأفْعال الـمُضَعَّفَة

The last sub-category of فَعَلَ verbs is a group of verbs that have a final doubled, geminated consonant, as in عَدَّ / يَعُدُّ "to count, to consider," مَرَّ / يَمُرُّ "to pass through," and so on.

1.9.1.6 Verbs of beginning أَفعال الشُّروع

This is a group of verbs denoting the onset of an action. Such verbs must be followed by a noun forming an equational sentence whose predicate must be an indicative present tense verb. For that reason, Arab grammarians consider verbs of beginning members of كانَ and its sisters (see Chapter 10) . This structure is used to indicate actions that happened in the past. All these verbs have the meaning of "[he] began, started, initiated." Such a finite list of verbs includes the following examples: أَخَذَ / يَأْخُذُ "[he] took it upon himself," بَدَأَ / يَبْدَأُ "he began," شَرَعَ / يَشْرَعُ "he started," etc.

These verbs are generally followed by verbs in the present tense to express the notion that someone initiated an action. Note that the forms of verbs of beginning themselves are in the past tense; however, the verb following them must be in the present tense. Examine the following illustrative examples:

أَخَذَ يَدْرُسُ عِنْدَما شاهَدَني.	He started to study when he saw me.
هَبَّ يُدافِعُ عَن هذِهِ القَضِيَّةِ.	He rushed to defend this matter.
شَرَعَ يَتَكَلَّمُ عَنْ آرائِهِ السِّياسِيَّةِ.	He began talking about his political views.
صارَ يَصيحُ بِصَوْتٍ عالٍ.	He started shouting in a loud voice.
أَخَذَ يَتَكَلَّمُ عَنِ السِّياسَةِ.	He began talking about politics.
بَدَأَ يَكْتُبُ مُذَكَّراتِهِ.	He started writing his memoirs.

1.9.2 Augmented verbs الأَفْعال الـمَزيدَة (Forms II–X)

The فَعَلَ form can be manipulated by prefixes and/or infixes, or a combination of these to create other verb categories. These elements are represented in the orthography and include doubling of a consonant in the middle or end of a verb (Form II), as was mentioned previously. In addition, there are the long

vowel *aa* represented by *'alif* in the orthography (Form III); a *hamza* written on an *'alif* (Form IV); a *taa'* prefixed to Form II verbs (Form V); or a combination of *taa'* as a prefix and *'alif* as an infix (Form VI); or a combination of *'alif* and *nuun* as a prefix (Form VII); or *'alif* as prefix and *taa'* as infix (Form VIII); an *'alif* and doubling of the final consonant (Form IX); and, finally, اِسْتَ as prefix (Form X). Discussion of the various verb categories follows.

1.9.2.1 Form II verbs صيغَة فَعَّلَ

This verb form is derived from فَعَلَ verbs by doubling the middle consonant. In the Arabic orthography, this is represented by writing the *shadda* followed by a *fat-Ha* above the middle consonant. This doubling of the middle consonant results in new verbs with new special meanings. Since فَعَّلَ form verbs are derived from فَعَلَ verbs, a semantic link between the original form and the augmented one may exist. For example, دَرَسَ / يَدْرُسُ means "to study." دَرَّسَ / يُدَرِّسُ, on the other hand, means "to make someone study" or "to cause someone to study." دَرَّسَ is, therefore, used in the sense of "to teach." Verbs in this category tend to be transitive, i.e. they require a direct object.

Some فَعَّلَ form verbs indicate a level of intensity added to the original meaning of فَعَلَ forms. For example, كَسَّرَ / يُكَسِّرُ is augmented from كَسَرَ / يَكْسِرُ "to break." It conveys the meaning of "to break in an intensive fashion," i.e., "to smash."

1.9.2.2 Form III verbs صيغَة فاعَلَ

This verb form is derived from the فَعَلَ form by phonetically elongating the *fat-Ha* sound; in the orthography by inserting an *'alif* ا after the first consonant, resulting in فاعَلَ. Some verbs in this category can be transitive, others intransitive. Intransitive verbs require a preposition. Many instances of فاعَلَ forms indicate reciprocity or mutuality and have a semantic relationship to فَعَلَ verb forms. This relationship, however, is sometimes tenuous. Examine the following examples:

ساعَدَ المُدَرِّسُ الطالِبَ.	The instructor helped the student.
قابَلَ المُديرُ الطَّبيبَةَ.	The director met with the physician.

1.9.2.3 Form IV verbs صيغة أَفْعَلَ

Verbs in this form are derived by the prefixation of a *hamza* at the beginning of the فَعَلَ form. In the orthography, the *hamza* at the beginning of a word must always have a "seat" in the form of an *'alif*; such augmentation results in change in the vowel pattern. Notice in this form that the first consonant is not followed by a vowel; a *sukuun* is provided in the orthography. Many verbs in this category are transitive, others intransitive. In many instances أَفْعَلَ forms have a causal semantic relationship to فَعَلَ verb forms. This relationship, however, is sometimes tenuous. Examine the following examples:

عَلِمَ بالخَبَرِ.	He knew of the news [item].
أَعْلَمَ صَديقَهُ بالخَبَرِ.	He informed his friend of the news [item].
فَهِمَ السُّؤالَ.	He understood the question.
أَفْهَمَني السُّؤالَ.	He explained the question to me.

1.9.2.4 Form V verbs صيغة تَفَعَّلَ

This form is obtained by the prefixation of the ت to فَعَّلَ Form II verbs. Whereas Form II has a causative effect, the addition of *taa'* at the beginning contributes to make تَفَعَّلَ Form V reflexive, as in قَطَّعَ "to cut intensively," تَقَطَّعَ "to be cut." In addition, Form V also conveys a sense of intensity. For example, اِفْتَرَقَ means "to separate," and تَفَرَّقَ conveys the meaning of "disperse." Examine the following examples:

تَفَرَّقَ المُتظاهِرونَ في شَوارِعِ المَدينةِ.	The demonstrators dispersed in the streets of the city.
تَكَلَّمَ المُحاضِرُ عَنْ سوريا.	The lecturer spoke about Syria.
تَأَلَّمَتِ الأُمُّ لِمَرَضِ اِبْنِها.	The mother felt pain due to her son's illness.

1.9.2.5 Form VI verbs صيغة تَفاعَلَ

This form is derived by the prefixation of *taa'* to the فاعَلَ form, thus resulting in تَفاعَلَ—a form that conveys the sense of reciprocity or mutuality. فاعَلَ verb

forms and those of تَفاعَلَ share features of the same meaning. The difference between these two categories, however, is in their syntax. Whereas فاعَلَ forms often tend to have a direct object, تَفاعَلَ verbs, on the other hand, often require the use of a preposition, most commonly مَعَ.

تَساعَدَ مَعَ الطُّلاّبِ. He and the students cooperated.
تَقابَلَ مَعَ الزُّوّارِ. He met with the visitors.

1.9.2.6 Form VII verbs صيغَة اِنْفَعَلَ

This form is derived from فَعَلَ verb forms by the prefixation of اِنْـ to فَعَلَ verbs. In general, this verb form expresses a reflexive or passive meaning, i.e. something that happens to the entity, a person or a thing, from within itself, without external agents. For example, كَسَرَ "to break," requires an agent to effect the action. On the other hand, اِنْكسر expresses that the thing broke by itself; it was not broken by an outside agent. All اِنْفَعَلَ form verbs are intransitive; some in this category require the use of a preposition, usually مِنْ "from," إلى "to," or مَعَ "with," but other prepositions are also possible.

اِنْسَحَبَ مِنَ الاِجْتِماعِ. He withdrew from the meeting.
اِنْكَسَرَ الزُّجاجُ. The glass broke.

1.9.2.7 Form VIII verbs صيغَة اِفْتَعَلَ

This verb form is derived by two processes: the use of *hamza* as a prefix (in the orthography it is written as an *'alif* with a *kasra* underneath it), and the insertion of a *taa'* after the first consonant of فَعَلَ verbs. The first consonant is not followed by a vowel. This explains why in the orthography the *sukuun* is written above the first organic consonant of the verb. From the verb سَمِعَ / يَسْمَعُ "to hear," we obtain اِسْتَمَعَ / يَسْتَمِعُ "to listen." Some of the verbs in this pattern are transitive, requiring direct objects; others are intransitive and require the use of prepositions.

The inserted *taa'* in this pattern undergoes changes in the environment of voiced and/or emphatic sounds. Thus, in the verb زَحَمَ / يَزْحَمُ "to crowd, to push," the *taa'* changes to its voiced counterpart, namely *daal*. Instead of the expected اِزْتَحَمَ the actual verb in use is اِزْدَحَمَ / يَزْدَحِمُ "to become crowded."

Similarly, in the verb زَهَرَ / يُزْهِرُ "to bloom, flourish" the *taa'* is assimilated by the voiced consonant ز and changes to *daal*, thus creating the verb اِزْدَهَرَ / يَزْدَهِرُ "to flourish, prosper."

If *dhaal* is the first letter/sound of the tri-consonantal verb, the inserted *taa'* is assimilated by this first letter. From ذَخَرَ "to keep, preserve" we obtain اِدَّخَرَ "to save, preserve, amass, hoard."

If the first letter/sound of the فَعَلَ Form I verb is either ص or ض the inserted ت changes into ط. Similarly, if the first letter/sound of the فَعَلَ Form I verb is ط the inserted ت changes to ط; if the first letter/sound is ظ the inserted ت changes to ظ, as the following examples illustrate:

From صَلَحَ, one of whose meanings is "to be useful," we obtain اِصْطَلَحَ "to accept, to adopt"; from صادَ "to catch, to trap," we obtain اِصْطادَ "to catch, to hunt." From ضَجَعَ "to sleep, recline," we obtain the verb اِضْطَجَعَ "to recline, to sleep, to lie down"; from ضَرَبَ "to hit," we obtain اِضْطَرَبَ "to be in a state of turmoil, to agitate." From طَلَعَ "to appear, to rise, to become visible," we obtain اِطَّلَعَ "to behold a view"; from ظَلَمَ "to do injustice to someone," we obtain اِظَّلَمَ "to suffer injustice, to be wronged."

Consider the following examples:

اِزْدَحَمَتِ الشَّوارِعُ بالزُّوّارِ.	The streets were crowded with tourists.
اِزْدَهَرَ اِقْتِصادُ البِلادِ.	The country's economy flourished.
اِصْطادَ الصّيّادُ سَمَكَةً كَبيرَةً.	The fisher caught a big fish.
اِدَّخَرَ المُسْتَثْمِرُ أَمْوالاً كَثيرَةً.	The investor amassed huge amounts of money.
اِضْطَرَبَتِ الأَسواقُ المالِيَّةُ أَثْناءَ الحَرْبِ.	The stock markets were in a state of turmoil during the war.

In *waaw*-beginning verbs the *waaw* is assimilated by the inserted *taa'*. From Form I verb وَصَلَ "to arrive at," we obtain اِتَّصَلَ "to contact, communicate with," of Form VIII. Similarly, from أَخَذَ "to take," the Form VIII verb is اِتَّخَذَ "to take up, to take on, to adopt." Examine the following:

اِتَّصَلَ بي صَديقي أَحْمَد مِن دِمَشْق.	My friend Ahmad contacted me from Damascus.
اِتَّخَذَ سامي رَأْيَ أَبيهِ.	Sami adopted his father's opinion.

1.9.2.8 Form IX verbs صيغَة اِفْعَلَّ

This verb form is obtained by the use of *hamza* as a prefix to the فَعَلَ form (in the orthography it is written as an *'alif* with a *kasra* underneath it) and the doubling of the final consonant, represented in the writing system by a *shadda*. Note that the first consonant is not followed by a vowel. افْعَلَّ verbs tend to designate physical defects or change of color. For example, the triconsonantal verb عَرَجَ / يَعْرُجُ pertains to limping or lameness. Thus, the verb اِعْرَجَّ / يَعْرَجُّ is used to express the condition of someone who has become lame.

افْعَلَّ however is used more frequently to express a change of color. These verbs are always intransitive. From the adjective أَحْمَر "red," we obtain اِحْمَرَّ / يَحْمَرُّ "to become red, to change color into red," as in the following example:

اِحْمَرَّتِ السَّماءُ.	The sky turned red.

1.9.2.9 Form X verbs صيغَة اِسْتَفْعَلَ

This form is derived by the prefixation of اِسْتَ to فَعَلَ verbs. Note the change in the vowel pattern, namely the dropping of the *fat-Ha* after the first consonant of فَعَلَ verbs. Thus, from عَلِمَ / يَعْلَمُ "to know," we derive اِسْتَعْلَمَ / يَسْتَعْلِمُ "to inquire." In this example, a connection in meaning between عَلِمَ and اِسْتَعْلَمَ can be discerned. In other words, اِسْتَعْلَمَ "to inquire," has something to do with wanting to know. The relationship in meaning between the فَعَلَ verb form and its derived counterpart اسْتَفْعَلَ may not always obtain. Some verbs in this category are transitive, requiring a direct object; others are intransitive and require the use of prepositions.

اِسْتَقْبَلَتِ العائِلَةُ االزّائِرَ.	The family received the visitor.
اِسْتَفْسَرَ الطَّبيبُ عَنِ المَريضِ.	The doctor inquired about the patient.

1.9.3 Quadriliteral verbs

A group of verbs in Arabic consist of four consonants, hence the name الأفعال الرُّباعِيَّة "quadriliteral verbs." Examples of such include تَرجَمَ/ يُتَرْجِمُ "to translate," سَيْطَرَ/ يُسَيْطِرُ "to control," هَنْدَسَ / يُهَنْدِسُ "to engineer," and طَمْأَنَ / يُطَمْئِنُ "to assure, to calm someone down."

A common form of quadriliteral verbs is what is referred to as duplicatives. These are verbs in which the same syllable is duplicated, often expressing movement or sound. Such verbs include وَسْوَسَ / يُوَسْوِسُ "to whisper," زَلْزَلَ / يُزَلْزِلُ "to shake," بَلْبَلَ / يُبَلْبِلُ "to confound, confuse," عَشْعَشَ / يُعَشْعِشُ "to nest," قَلْقَلَ / يُقَلْقِلُ "to disturb." (See Chapter 25 for more details.)

1.10 VERB MOODS

Verbs reflect whether the sentence conveys a simple statement of fact; expresses a belief, ability, or desire; gives a direct command; or states a conditional situation. These different nuances are called moods. The moods of Arabic verbs pertain only to the present tense. The past tense does not have moods.

1.10.1 Indicative mood حالةُ الرَّفْع

Verbs in the indicative mood comprise the majority of verb usage in the language. The indicative mood expresses statements of facts or opinions, as in the following examples:

يُغَيِّرُ عُنْوانَهُ كُلَّ سَنَةٍ.	He changes his address annually.
تَدْرُسُ الإِسبانِيَّةَ.	She is studying Spanish.

1.10.2 Subjunctive mood

This mood occurs in dependent clauses following verbs in the main clause using, among many others, verbs like أَمِلَ "hope," أَرادَ "want," تَمَنّى "wish," رَغِبَ "desire," خاف "fear," أَحَبَّ "want, like, love," وَدَّ "desire," نَصَحَ "advise," اقْتَرَحَ "suggest." Such verbs must be followed by a finite set of particles, called أدوات النَّصْب "subjunctive particles," that are in turn followed by verbs having endings different from those in the indicative mood. Discussion of this and the particles that cause this change in verb endings is in Chapter 13.

The subjunctive in Arabic is not dissimilar to changes in present tense verbs for the English third person singular pronouns, "he" and "she". In the environment of verbs like "suggest," "advise," "recommend," etc., the verbs following in the dependent clause have different endings from the indicative, as in the following examples:

I suggest that he change his address annually.
Her advisor recommends that she study Spanish.

1.10.3 Jussive mood

Verbs in this mood can occur in main and subordinate clauses and assume different endings from those in the indicative, with some similarity to those in the subjunctive. This includes the use of the imperative mood, conditionals (both in the main and conditional clauses), and the use of the negative particle لَمْ to negate past tense actions. (Jussive with conditionals is in Chapter 20, and with لَمْ is in Chapter 15.)

1.10.4 Imperative mood

The imperative mood expresses a direct command in either the affirmative or negative. It is generally addressed to the second person, i.e. the various forms of "you." (See Chapter 17 for a detailed discussion.)

CHAPTER 2

Nouns الأَسْماء

The definition of nouns by linguists faces controversy as one definition by certain criteria may not fit all languages in the world. We will nonetheless attempt to provide a working definition of nouns. A noun denotes a person, place, thing or abstract idea. As members of a lexical category nouns can perform certain functions in the language. For example, the Arabic word شَجَرَةٌ "tree," while referring to an entity known to all readers, can only function as a subject of a sentence, or a direct object of a transitive verb, or it can be preceded by a preposition like عَلى "on," or تَحْتَ "under," and so on. This Arabic word can also vary its number as it can be put in dual or plural; in addition the definite article اَلـ "the" can attach to it. On the other hand, the English equivalent *tree* can do some but not all of the preceding functions of the Arabic noun; for example it cannot have a dual form morphologically by adding a suffix as in the Arabic case; yet the English *tree* can, albeit not commonly, be used as a verb, which the Arabic equivalent cannot.

2.1 TYPES OF NOUNS

Nouns in Arabic are generally derived from verbs. كِتابٌ "book," for example, is derived from the verbs كَتَبَ "to write," and مِفْتاحٌ "key," from فَتَحَ "to open," according to a certain pattern (see Chapter 28). A noun of this type is often referred to as اِسْم مُشْتَق "derivative," extracted from a verb form. Other nouns such as عَيْنٌ "eye," فَرَسٌ "horse," or بَطَّةٌ "duck," are not derived from verbs; they are often labeled as اِسْم جامِد "primitive," or "stationary." Other types of nouns that Arab grammarians recognize in their rich grammar tradition are nouns that express concrete objects such as حَجَرٌ "stone," or abstract ideas such as عِلْمٌ "knowledge," or جَهْلٌ "ignorance." These are grouped under اِسْم جِنْس "a generic or common noun." Contrasted with this, there exists a category of nouns known by the name اِسْم عَلَم "proper nouns," to refer to named entities, such as عُمَر "Omar," سوزان "Susanne," القاهِرَة "Cairo," and so on.

Nouns derived from verbal forms are of many types, including, among others, المَصادِر (plural of مَصْدَر) "verbal nouns or gerunds" (see Chapter 25); أَسْماء الفاعِل "agentive nouns," or "active participles" (see Chapter 23); أَسْماء المَفْعول "passive participles" (see Chapter 24). Plurals of noun أَسْماء المَكان "place nouns," أَسْماء المِهْنَة "nouns of profession," أَسْماء الوِحْدة "unit nouns," أَسْماء الآلة "instrument nouns," etc. are all discussed in Chapter 28.

It is necessary to mention here that Arabic categorizes plural nouns in two groups: human, such as مُوَظَّفونَ "employees," طُلاّبٌ "students," مُديراتٌ "directors (F)," and non-human, as in كِلابٌ "dogs," مَدارِسُ "schools," طائراتٌ "airplanes." Non-human plural nouns are treated as feminine singular in all their behavior in the language. We turn now to discuss various features of nouns.

2.2 GENDER

Nouns in Arabic are grouped in three classes with respect to gender. A noun can be masculine مُذَكَّر, feminine مُؤَنَّث, or, as in the case of a few nouns, either masculine or feminine. There is no neuter in Arabic.

Feminine nouns can be most readily recognized by their form, ending with ة *taa' marbuuTa* as in قَرْيَةٌ "village," عاصِمَةٌ "capital." They can also be identified by three other endings: the long *'alif* ا as in دُنيا "life, world," or the *'alif maqSuura* ى as in حُمّى "fever," بُشْرى "good news," or, in some cases, *'alif hamza* اء as in صَحْراء "desert," حِرْباء "chameleon." Moreover, feminine nouns can be recognized by what they signify, for instance a female entity such as أُمٌّ "mother," or عَروسٌ "bride." Feminine nouns can indicate a natural or real feminine entity such as اِمْرَأَةٌ "woman," or an assigned gender such as الشَّمْس "the sun," or الأَرْض "the earth, land."

We must also emphasize that all cities in Arabic are treated as feminine nouns. Countries, on the other hand, can be either feminine or masculine. Countries that are written with regular *'alif* or *taa' marbuuTa* are always feminine, as in أَمْريكا (written as أَمْريكة by some) or سورية / سوريا, etc. Some other countries are treated as masculine, for example العِراق or السّودان.

As a general rule, nouns can be changed into their feminine forms through the addition of *taa' marbuuTa* ة preceded by a *fat-Ha* at the end of the masculine noun. For example, طالِبٌ "student (M)," becomes طالِبَةٌ "student (F)." (Note that the *taa' marbuuTa* ة is represented in the orthography as a *taa' maftuuHa* ت when a suffix, such as a possessive suffix pronoun, is added to feminine

nouns.) However, the feminine forms of the masculine أَوَّل "first," آخَر "other," and أَحَد "one of" end with *'alif maqSuura*, as in أُولى "first (F)," أُخْرى "other (F)," and إِحْدى "one of," respectively, not to mention other phonological changes in these words that are beyond this discussion.

It is worthy of mention that there are a few masculine nouns that end with *taa' marbuuTa*. These include, among others, خَليفَة "caliph," also a man's name," أُسامَة "Osama," رَحّالَة "avid traveler," عَلاّمَة "erudite scholar," etc.

Finally, there are a few instances where a noun can be used in either the masculine or the feminine. Such examples include سوقٌ "suq, market," دُكّانٌ "shop," سِكّينٌ "knife," طَريقٌ "way, path."

2.3 NUMBER

Nouns in Arabic can be in the singular, dual or plural. Plural nouns are treated in some detail in Chapter 28.

Dual formation, masculine or feminine, is accomplished by the suffixation of انِ to the termination of singular nouns. The ة *taa' marbuuTa* of feminine nouns changes in this case to a regular *taa'* ت, *taa' maftuuHa* or *taa' Tawiila* (as it is called by some), as in the following examples:

Singular nominative	*Dual nominative*	
طالِبٌ	طالِبانِ	Two students (M)
مُعَلِّمٌ	مُعَلِّمانِ	Two teachers (M)

Singular nominative	*Dual nominative*	
طالِبَةٌ	طالِبَتانِ	Two students (F)
مُعَلِّمَةٌ	مُعَلِّمَتانِ	Two teachers (F)

The examples in the dual, masculine and feminine, in the preceding tables, are in the nominative case, known by the Arabic name مَرْفوع. Nouns, regardless of number, take different endings, depending on their function in the sentence. (See Chapter 3 for discussion of the Arabic case system.) By coincidence, dual nouns have the same ending in the accusative and genitive cases, namely يْنِ. In other words, ان changes to يْنِ as shown in the following tables:

Dual nominative	Dual accusative/genitive	
طالِبانِ	طالِبَيْنِ	Two students (M)
مُعَلِّمانِ	مُعَلِّمَيْنِ	Two teachers (M)

Dual nominative	Dual accusative/genitive	
طالِبَتانِ	طالِبَتَيْنِ	Two students (F)
مُعَلِّمَتانِ	مُعَلِّمَتَيْنِ	Two teachers (F)

Singular nouns that end with *'alif maqSuura* require the insertion of *yaa'* ي before the dual marker انِ is suffixed. Thus, مَلْهى "entertainment place," and فَتْوى "religious legal opinion," become مَلْهَيانِ and فَتْوَيانِ respectively. Similarly, singular nouns whose ending is *yaa'* elided with *tanwiin kasra* as in ماشٍ "a walker," and بانٍ "a builder," for example, require the insertion of *yaa'* before the dual suffix is added. Thus, we obtain ماشِيانِ and بانِيانِ respectively.

The dual of singular nouns which end with *'alif hamza* اء as in صَحْراء "desert," and سَماء "sky," requires the insertion of *waaw* و before the dual suffix is attached. Thus, we obtain صَحْراوانِ "two deserts," and سَماوانِ "two skies." Similarly, أَبٌ "father," and أَخٌ "brother," and the others in this group (see الأَسْماءُ الخَمسة at the end of this chapter) require the insertion of *waaw* before the dual suffix is attached, as in the following: أَبَوانِ "two fathers," and أَخَوانِ "two brothers."

2.4 DETERMINATION OF NOUNS

Arab grammarians follow the tradition of citing nouns in dictionaries or in glossary lists in their indefinite, nominative, masculine forms. For example, مُعَلِّمٌ "teacher (M)," ends with two *Dhammas* ٌ in its orthographic representation in a glossary list. The first *Dhamma* ُ indicates that this noun is in the nominative case; the second indicates the noun is indefinite. The second *Dhamma* has the value of an *-n* sound, a process referred to as *tanwiin* in Arabic. The case system in Arabic is discussed in some detail in Chapter 3.

There are four different ways of changing nouns (and adjectives for that matter) from indefinite to definite, i.e. unknown or unspecified entity to known, specified. This process is known by the name of determination, or تَعْريف الاِسْم in Arabic.

1. Nouns are made definite by the pre-fixation of the definite article الـ "the" to common nouns. By placing الـ in front of the common noun, the indefinite marker, i.e. the second *-n* sounding *Dhamma* mentioned above is dropped and the noun remains with only one *Dhamma* at its end. Thus, مُعَلِّمٌ "teacher" becomes المُعَلِّمُ "the teacher."

   The use of the definite article الـ is common in Arabic to indicate general categories or to make categorical statements. Thus, one speaks of السَّيّارَة "car" in Arabic without a reference to a specific car but to the means of transportation in general. In addition, الـ is commonly used with plural nouns to indicate categories. For example, الطلاّب "students" expresses a categorical statement without specifying particular individuals.
2. Nouns become definite by suffixing a possessive pronoun (see Chapter 5). If we take مُعَلِّمٌ "teacher," and add the possessive suffix نا "our," we obtain مُعَلِّمُنا "our teacher." Notice that the second *Dhamma* in مُعَلِّمٌ, the marker of indefiniteness, is dropped, whereas the nominative case marker is maintained.
3. Nouns become definite in *IDhaafa*-constructs whose terminal noun is definite. In the example كِتابُ المُعَلِّمِ "*lit.* the book of the teacher; the teacher's book," the first noun كِتاب does not carry الـ "the," yet it is interpreted as specified, known to readers or speakers by virtue of the definite noun المُعَلِّم. Thus, while the initial noun is not carrying the definite article الـ it can be interpreted as definite by virtue of the terminal definite noun in such structures. However, if the second noun in *IDhaafa*-constructs is indefinite, then both elements in the construct are not specified, they are indefinite. Thus, كِتابُ مُعَلِّم would refer to an unspecified book belonging to some unspecified teacher, "book of a teacher, a teacher's book." (See Chapter 8 for a detailed discussion.)
4. Abstract nouns such as الحُرِّيَّةُ "freedom," الصَّداقَةُ "friendship," التَّعليم "learning, education," الحُبُّ "love," etc. are always definite and are used with the definite article الـ or as a part of *IDhaafa*.
5. Finally, a noun is definite, i.e. اِسْم مُعَرَّف by virtue of its being a proper noun. Thus, names of people or other entities such as عَلي "Ali" or مَرْيَم "Maryam" or دِمَشْق "Damascus" or نْيويورك "New York" are known entities and recognized to be definite by virtue of their being known to those involved in interlocution.

2.5 FUNCTION OF NOUNS

Nouns can play the following functions which are subject to certain requirements, conditions and/or constraints, as will be seen below:

1. Subjects of nominal or equational sentences: As subjects of this sentential structure, nouns must be definite (see the preceding section). In addition, common nouns must be in the nominative case (see Chapter 3). Nouns in the subject position can be singular, dual or plural, as in the following examples:

المُعَلِّمُ جَديدٌ.	The teacher (M, Sg) is new.
الصَّديقانِ مِن سوريا.	The two friends (M, D) are from Syria.
البَناتُ في المَلْعَبِ.	The girls (F, Pl) are on the playground.

2. Predicates of nominal or equational sentences: Nouns as predicates are placed after subjects have been introduced. Predicates of equational/nominal sentences can be common or proper nouns. Common nouns in the predicate position must be indefinite and also nominative, as illustrated below:

هِيَ مُديرَةٌ.	She is a director.
هُم طُلاّبٌ.	They are students.

Predicate nouns can also be definite. In this case, the subject and predicate must be separated by a third person pronoun, depending on the number and gender of the subject. In other words, it can be the third person singular pronouns هُوَ or هِيَ, the dual pronoun هُما, or the plural pronouns هُمْ or هُنَّ as in the following examples:

مَحْمود هُوَ المُديرُ.
Mahmoud is the director.

سامِيَة ولَيلى هُما المُوَظَّفتانِ.
Samia and Leila are the employees (F, D).

جورج وموسى ومُحمَّد هُم المُدَرِّسونَ.
George, Musa and Mohammed are the teachers (M, Pl).

3. Predicate nouns of equational sentences preceded by one of the members of كانَ and its "sisters" (its verb group) must change into the accusative (see Chapter 10 on *kaana*). The subject of such sentences must remain nominative, as in the following:

كانَ الرَّجُلُ مُوَظَّفاً.	The man was an employee.
لَيْسَت المَرْأَةُ مُديرَةً.	The woman is not a director.

4. Nouns in subject positions preceded by one of the members of إِنَّ and its "sisters" must be in the accusative case. The noun or adjective predicate of such sentences must maintain its nominative case, as in the following:

إِنَّ الطَّقْسَ جَميلٌ.	Indeed the weather is beautiful.

5. Verbal sentences are those in which verbs are in initial positions in sentence structures. Nouns following verbs in these sentences can be performers of actions expressed by the verbs and are known as the فاعِل in Arabic grammar terminology. In such cases, the فاعِل must be in the nominative case. The فاعِل can be definite or indefinite. However, the فاعِل gender determines the gender of the verb. In other words, if the فاعِل is a masculine noun, the verb must also exhibit this gender; similarly, if it is feminine, the verb must also be marked for feminine. Examine the following:

نامَ الطِّفْلُ.	The baby (M) went to sleep.
ضَحِكَت الأُستاذَةُ.	The teacher (F) laughed.
وَصَلَت سَيّارَةٌ.	A car arrived.

The فاعِل following the verb could be in the singular, dual or plural. However, the verb in verbal sentences when it occupies its usual initial position must always be singular. The verb needs only to be marked for gender, i.e. masculine or feminine determined by the gender of the فاعِل, as in the following:

عادَ الصَّديقانِ.	The friends (M, D) returned.
زارتِ البَناتُ مِصر.	The girls (F, Pl) visited Egypt.